

Message from ASTI President Ann Piggott:

Dear ASTI Member,

The return to school in 2020 is like no other. The workplaces you suddenly left on March 12th have been transformed. Every fragment of physical space in your building is precious as maintaining required distance is essential. Rigorous cleaning, face coverings and sanitisers are further precautions to minimise viral spread. Your health is dependent on first-rate practices in schools. Any less is unacceptable.

The role of the lead worker representative is vital in overseeing safety in schools. It is encouraging that many members have expressed views, seeking to ensure that capable people who are well matched to the role, will undertake this important and responsible position.

This is a time of diverse emotions, there will be happiness in meeting students, however heightened apprehensions are palpable as each individual must be safe in the challenging environments of schools.

The pandemic has amplified issues which have been incessantly highlighted by the ASTI including class size, equal pay, supervision, better infrastructure, training, equipment and underfunding in education.

The value of teachers in society has been clearly acknowledged. Without training, teachers rapidly responded to educate students and also professionally and positively engaged in calculating leaving cert grades. The ASTI sought and gained full indemnity for teachers in relation to exams. The value of the independently examined leaving cert has also been shown to be trustworthy, impartial and fair.

It is an enormous challenge to open schools and educate 370,000 second-level students alongside the most serious problem ever to have affected education. As I begin my year as ASTI President, I am aware of your substantial concerns and I shall continue to make representations on your behalf and raise your issues in negotiations.

A trade union is a strong body. Unions have improved and maintained conditions for workers in many professions throughout the years. Without trade unions in schools, work practices, education standards and pay would dramatically erode. Encouraging others to join a union will make your workplace stronger.

Please continue to refer to the ASTI website for latest news and to find answers to queries you may have.

Best wishes as you embark on the demanding year ahead,

Ann Piggott, President

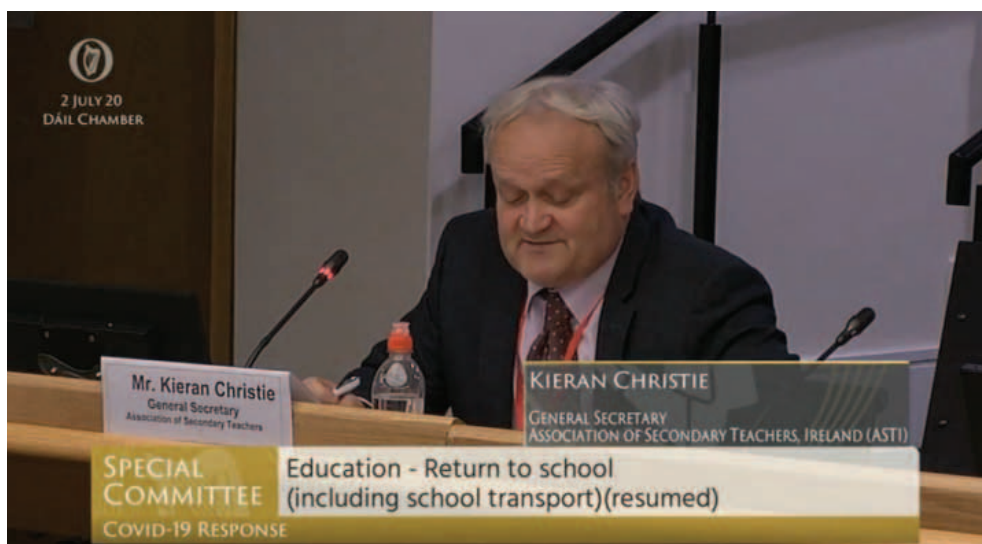


Your health is
dependent on
first-rate practices
in schools

The role of the lead
worker representative
is vital in overseeing
safety in schools

Schools will have
to be Covid-19
secure workplaces

Never before in
our lifetimes has
the need to be in a
strong trade union
been more evident



ASTI Acts to Protect Members

The enormity of the imposition that has been enforced on all our lives by Covid-19 could not have been foreseen. For teachers, the imposition was particularly acute. Their immediate response, undertaken without resources or training, by delivering a sterling service to their students remotely, stands as a massive credit to their professionalism and their commitment to their students and their communities. It was followed by astonishing work on Calculated Grades.

The vital social role of the education system and of teachers in particular is now apparent to everyone.

Now, the challenge of the reopening of schools is before us.

ASTI has insisted that in every instance in our schools, the health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre must be implemented in full. Our members, together with their students and everyone in our school communities, must be safe. Schools will have to be Covid-19 secure workplaces.

ASTI has been very proactive since the onset of the pandemic. We provided the Government with a comprehensive list of requirements that needed to be put in place prior to schools reopening. Many were included in the *The Roadmap for the Full Return to School* following our strong representations.

ASTI representatives have made several media appearances to ensure that teachers' voices have been heard on all the major issues. We have engaged in several meetings with the Department of Education and have addressed the *Dáil Special Committee on Covid-19 Response* to impress the need for a safe reopening of schools.

We have proved to be steadfast when necessary. For instance, we made a strong stand to ensure that an appropriate scheme of indemnification for teachers was put in place before any work commenced on Calculated Grades. We also insisted that the Minister for Education and Skills initiate a review of the interim health advice and guidance from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, particularly regarding the wearing of face coverings in schools, in advance of schools reopening.

Never before in our lifetimes has the need to be in a strong trade union been more evident. The longstanding issues regarding the implementation of the *Junior Cycle Framework* will still need to be resolved. Equal Pay for Equal Work remains a top priority for ASTI. The proposed reform of Senior Cycle will undoubtedly be challenging. With the difficulties that will be faced in schools in the coming year and the negotiations about to commence on a successor to the *Public Service Stability Agreement*, ASTI stands ready to play its role in protecting the terms and conditions of its members while seeking to achieve a more equal and sustainable education for all.

**ASTI Keeps Members
Informed – Visit
www.asti.ie**



Since the onset of the pandemic, ASTI has striven to keep members informed and updated on evolving events. Members should make sure to visit our website regularly for latest news as it comes to hand.

Currently, ASTI has published a large store of information on the arrangements for reopening schools including an extensive Frequently Asked Questions section.

Make sure to visit — **www.asti.ie**

Members should
make sure to visit
our website regularly
for latest news as
it comes to hand

ASTI Annual Convention held remotely in July 2020

The postponed ASTI Annual Convention due to be held at Easter 2020 took place online on the Zoom platform, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, on Friday 24th July.

This was further to a decision by Standing Committee to request Steering Committee to re-order the agenda for Annual Convention 2020 to prioritise business to protect the structures of the union as far as possible so that a remote commencement to Convention could be facilitated before 31st July.

A motion with twelve constituent parts formed the centrepiece of the business that was undertaken on the day.

The then ASTI President, Deirdre MacDonald, chaired the proceedings. The adoption of the motion was interspersed with other business including presentation of the Education Report, the Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Annual Trustees' Report. The General Secretary provided an address that ranged across current issues and the upcoming talks on a successor to the *Public Service Stability Agreement*.

Annual Convention conferred the award of Honorary Life Member to Mr Ger Curtin of the Dublin North West branch. Ger has provided a lifetime of service and has acted in many capacities within the ASTI.

The then President of ASTI, Deirdre MacDonald provided a wide-ranging address to delegates prior to closing what was a successful Convention.

The motion and the decisions taken are outlined as follows:



The postponed ASTI
Annual Convention
took place online on
Friday 24th July

The agenda was re-ordered to prioritise business to protect the structures of the union as far as possible

A motion with twelve constituent parts formed the centrepiece of the business of Remote Annual Convention 2020

MOTION:

That, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, ASTI Annual Convention adopt the following:

A	That the sole validly-nominated candidate for President of ASTI as of January 31 st 2020, Ann Piggott, be declared elected to hold the office in accordance with rule 114 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution.	This was adopted
B	That the sole validly-nominated candidate for Honorary Treasurer of ASTI as of January 31 st 2020, Pádraig Murphy, be declared elected to hold the office in accordance with rule 127 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution.	This was adopted
C	That the results of Regional Elections to Standing Committee, as presented by the General Secretary, be adopted.	This was adopted
D	That a postal ballot of eligible electors be held to elect the Vice-President of ASTI to hold office in accordance with rule 114 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution. Such election to be held in accordance with the procedures previously circulated to Annual Convention 2020 and the candidates for which to be the validly nominated candidates for Vice-President of ASTI as of January 31 st 2020.	This was adopted
E	That the current membership of the following named committees of ASTI be retained to serve in that capacity until Annual Convention 2021: Steering Committee Sickness Benefit Committee Investment Committee Pensions Sub-committee Rules Committee Business of CEC Committee	This was adopted
F	That the statement of accounts for 2019, circulated and presented by the Honorary Treasurer, be adopted by Annual Convention 2020.	This was adopted
G	That the subscription rates for ASTI members, presented by the Honorary Treasurer, be adopted by Annual Convention 2020.	This was adopted
H	That the report of the Trustees, formally presented by the Trustees, be adopted by Annual Convention 2020.	This was adopted
I	That the nomination by the Trustees of HLB Sheehan Quinn to be appointed to carry out the annual audit of the accounts of the ASTI be adopted.	This was adopted
J	That nominations for eligible candidates to contest the election of Honorary National Organiser be submitted on the prescribed form to the General Secretary no later than 4.30 p.m. on Friday 31 st July, 2020. That a postal ballot of eligible electors be held to elect the Honorary National Organiser to hold office in accordance with rule 151 of the ASTI Rules and Constitution. Such election to be held in accordance with the procedures previously circulated to Annual Convention 2020.	This was adopted
K	That the current membership of the following named committees of ASTI be retained to serve in that capacity until the next meeting of the Central Executive Council: Benevolent Fund Committee Awards Committee CEC Appeals Sub-committee	This was adopted
L	That the current cohort of Regional Organisers of ASTI be retained to serve in that capacity until the next meeting of the Central Executive Council.	This was adopted